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National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) Bill

Why in News?

The [Lok Sabha](#) unanimously passes the Bill for constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).

Details of Bill:

- It seeks to grant the National Commission on Backward Classes (NCBC) constitutional status, at par with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes.

Role of NCSC:

- Currently, under the Constitution the NCSC has the power to look into complaints and welfare measures with regard to Scheduled Castes, backward classes and Anglo-Indians. The Bill seeks to remove the power of the NCSC to examine matters related to backward classes.

Constitutional status to National Commission for Backward Classes:

- The NCBC is a body set up under the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993.
- It has the power to examine complaints regarding inclusion or exclusion of groups within the list of backward classes, and advise the central government in this regard.
- The Bill seeks to establish the NCBC under the Constitution, and provide it the authority to examine complaints and welfare measures regarding socially and educationally backward classes.



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Backward classes:

- The Constitution Amendment Bill states that the President may specify the socially and educationally backward classes in the various states and union territories. He may do this in consultation with the Governor of the concerned state. However, a law of Parliament will be required if the list of backward classes is to be amended.

Composition and service conditions:

Under the Constitution Amendment Bill, the NCBC will comprise of five members appointed by the President. Their tenure and conditions of service will also be decided by the President through rules.

Functions:

- Under the Constitution Amendment Bill, the duties of the NCBC will include:
 - (i) investigating and monitoring how safeguards provided to the backward classes under the Constitution and other laws are being implemented,
 - (ii) inquiring into specific complaints regarding violation of rights, and
 - (iii) advising and making recommendations on socio-economic development of such classes. The central and state governments will be required to consult with the NCBC on all major policy matters affecting the socially and educationally backward classes.

Powers of a civil court:

- Under the Constitution Amendment Bill, the NCBC will have the powers of a civil court while investigating or inquiring into any complaints. These powers include: (i) summoning people and examining them on oath, (ii) requiring production of any document or public record, and (iii) receiving evidence.

Special Package to Boost Export of Textiles



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To increase exports of textile and apparel, Government has announced a Special Package for garments and made-ups sectors.

The package offers labour law reforms, additional incentives under Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS), enhanced duty drawback coverage and relaxation of Section 80JJAA of Income Tax Act.

Benefits of ATUFS:

DRESSING UP FOR EXPORTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Rs. 5,500 crore for an additional five per cent duty drawback for garments		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Rs. 500 crore for additional incentives under Amended Technology Upgradation Funds Scheme		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Fixed term employment for the sector. A fixed term workman will be considered at par with a permanent workman		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Government to bear the entire employer's contribution of 12 per cent under the EPF Scheme, for		
	<p>new employees of garment industry earning less than Rs. 15,000 per month, for the first three years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ At present, 8.33 per cent of employer's contribution is provided by the Government

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SAATHI Initiative Launched

[*Ministry of Textiles and Ministry of Power*](#) have joined hands under the initiative SAATHI(Sustainable and Accelerated Adoption of efficient Textile technologies to Help Small Industries) in order to sustain and accelerate the adoption of energy efficient textile technologies in the powerloom sector and cost savings due to use of such technology.

About SAATHI Initiative:



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RE-ENERGIZING TEXTILE SECTOR WITH SAATHI (SUSTAINABLE AND ACCELERATED ADOPTION OF EFFICIENT TEXTILE TECHNOLOGIES TO HELP SMALL INDUSTRIES)



EESL to provide
Powerlooms equipment
to small and medium units
at no upfront cost



Demonstration
projects and workshops
will be organized in key
clusters



Would result in
energy & cost savings
to the unit owner



Repayments to EESL are made
from the **savings accrued**
from efficient equipments
and cost savings



**Benefits of reduction in
capital cost** of EESL will be
passed on to the units resulting in
reduced repayment amount

*EESL- Energy Efficiency Services Limited

Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a Public Sector entity under the administrative control of Ministry of Power, will replace old inefficient electric motors with energy efficient IE3 motors which will result in energy and cost saving up to 10-15% in the first phase.

The use of these efficient equipments will result in energy savings and cost savings to the unit owners at no upfront cost.

About EESL

- **Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)** is an [energy service company](#) (ESCO) of the [Government of India](#) and is the world's largest public [ESCO](#).
- It is 100% government owned, a [joint venture](#) of state-owned [NTPC Limited](#), [Power Finance Corporation](#), [Rural Electrification Corporation](#) and [POWERGRID](#).



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- EESL was formed under India's [Ministry of Power](#) to facilitate energy efficiency projects. Innovative business and implementation models can significantly reduce consumption and costs.

Integrate to Innovate Programme for energy Startups

Context:

Invest India has joined hands with energy sector companies to offer a unique lab-to-market opportunity for Indian startups through the Integrate to Innovate Programme.

About the Programme:

- Integrate to Innovate is a 3-month corporate acceleration programme for energy startups housed at the corporate premises
- The programme provides an opportunity for collaboration and conversation around valuable energy transitions, offering startups an opportunity to bring their ideas to life with the guidance and support from corporates.
- The selected startups will receive a cash prize grant of upto ₹ 5 Lakh per startup along with an opportunity to pilot their product with corporates. \
- The corporates would offer them access to technology, technical and commercial mentorship and access to potential customers through the corporate network of partners.

Environmental Issues

Plastics and GHG's

Plastic used in everyday objects from bottles to packaging emit [greenhouse gases](#) when exposed to sunlight, according to a study released on August 1, as global concern about its impact on the world's oceans grows.

About the Study:

Plastic pollution has come under increased scrutiny from environmentalists as the scale of the problem has become clear – this year it emerged that a giant island made up of plastic waste in the Pacific Ocean was far larger than thought.



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Now scientists have discovered that commonly used plastics also generate the potent greenhouse gas methane as well as ethylene as they age, adding to the global tally of planet-warming emissions.

Implications of GHG's Emission:

Methane emissions, mainly caused by burning fossil fuels, are a major driver of [global warming](#), putting them in the crosshairs of the global fight against climate change.

More than nine billion tons of plastic has been produced since 1950 with most of it discarded in landfills or the environment, previous research has found.

Scientists have repeatedly linked exposure to some plastic chemicals, such as bisphenol A (BPA), to health risks.

Contributions of Indians in Science &Tech

Fields medal

Why in News?

Akshay Venkatesh, a renowned Indian-Australian mathematician, is one of four winners of mathematics' prestigious Fields medal, known as the Nobel prize for math.

New Delhi-born Venkatesh, 36, who is currently teaching at Stanford University, has won the Fields Medal for his profound contributions to an exceptionally broad range of subjects in mathematics.

What is fields Medal?

- The Fields medals are awarded every four years to the most promising mathematicians under the age of 40.
- The prize was inaugurated in 1932 at the request of Canadian mathematician John Charles Fields, who ran the 1924 Mathematics Congress in Toronto.
- Each winner receives a 15,000 Canadian-dollar cash prize. At least two, and preferably four people, are always honoured in the award ceremony.



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